Frank Carlson Passes Away at Age of 79

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As many of you know, Frank was a stalwart of the Massachusetts apple industry and beyond. I won't go on to say how many leadership and advocacy roles he played for the local apple industry other than to say he was an advocate for UMass Extension and Research, including serving on the Trustees of the UMass Cold Spring Orchard where he and the others solicited many dollars for research and infrastructure improvement (tractors!) there. I encourage everyone to read Russell Powell's Memoriam to Frank (https://newenglandapples.org/2023/04/11/in-memoriam-frank-carlson/). Unfortunately, you need an account now to login to the Harvard Press to view Frank's Obituary (https://www.harvardpress.com/News/Obituaries/franklyn-walfrid-carlson) and a couple other articles (https://harvardpress.com/Features/Feature-Articles/town-and-farming-community-mourn-the-loss-of-frank-carlson-owner-of160carlson-orchards, https://harvardpress.com/Opinion/Editorial-Press-Opinion/franklyn-carlson) about his life and contributions to the Town of Harvard. (But it may be worth it if you have not seen them.).

I will remember Frank for my many visits to Carlson Orchards. Undoubtedly Frank would find Bruce and the three of us would pile in the truck (or 4-wheeler) and tour the current state of the Carlson Orchards. The norm was for Frank and brother Bruce to disagree (argue?)

Frank and Bruce Carlson with Jim Wargo and Mo Tougas figuring out some details of Accede application on May 25, 2021 at Carlson Orchards. (And enjoying some Carlson Orchards Cider!) Frank was always 100% engaged with every aspect of Carlson Orchards operation and success.

on how something should be done, and I always got a chuckle out of that. But I knew they could not live without each other either! And then there was Frank's ranting about the ongoing saga of the Cider Barn! LOL.

The last time I was at Carlson Orchards was a week after the February 2023 freeze which wiped out their (and everyone else's) peach crop. Shortly after that I was in Albany, New York for the Cornell fruit meeting, and met up with Bruce where he told me Frank was in the hospital and it "did not look good." I know Frank came home for the remainder of his days where he passed away peacefully on March 31. I also knew he had been ill for a while, but the news of his death was still a blow. One must wonder if Frank had just seen enough after the peach crop loss and foresaw the upcoming freeze of the apples on May 18 to call it quits?

A celebration of Frank's Life was held at Carlson Orchard on May 5 where a large crowd showed up expressing condolences to the family and appreciating his life. Many pictures of his family life, something I had never seen. We wish Bruce and Katie the best of luck going forward with Carlson Orchards and are always here to help.

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